

Washington D.C. 20515

ER 87-2332



16 June 1987

The Honorable Louis Stokes
Chairman
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I appreciate very much the opportunity to meet last week with you and Ranking Minority Member Hyde. Both Mr. Gates and I came away from the discussion with the clear view that you would give the new Director of Central Intelligence the opportunity to strengthen and enhance relationships with the Committee unencumbered by past problems and difficulties.

I do, however, appreciate the Committee sharing with me its report on perceived CIA shortcomings in dealing with HPSCI. This report covers incidents over a substantial number of years, during at least some of which there were different statutes, rules, and procedures in effect. I asked for comments from within this Agency and read the responses carefully. While most of the positions taken by Agency officials are arguably sound, it is clear that these incidents resulted in some erosion of mutual understanding and trust between the Committee and the Agency. I wish to reverse this erosion and to build anew the trust without which we cannot carry on our mission and without which you cannot comfortably perform your oversight function.

If at any time in the future anything at all occurs which causes the Committee to question the accuracy or level of candor of our reports to the Committee, whether orally or in writing, I earnestly hope that you will immediately call this to my attention. These issues, as we know, can cause severe damage over time to the trust factor, and should not be allowed to fester.

I am instructing all Agency officers appearing before the Committee to present testimony or briefings candidly and completely. When there is uncertainty as to the correct facts on our part, we shall so state candidly with a pledge to report to the Committee with the full and correct facts as soon as possible. When we have a problem in reporting fully because of

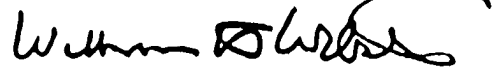


concerns over sources and methods, we will tell you so. It is very likely that following appropriate discussions we will be able to supply the needed information in a mutually satisfactory manner. Finally, we will make every effort to respond to written questions as promptly as possible and avoid some of the occasional long delays of the past.

I have great confidence that the informal regular contacts we have established can serve as a solid basis for preventing a good deal of the friction that may have existed in the past. I look forward to future discussions with you and Congressman Hyde.

With highest regards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'William H. Webster', with a stylized flourish at the end.

William H. Webster